Navigating the Complex Relationships between Pathway Providers and University Stakeholders

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Session Overview

• Introduction & Goals for Session
• Historical Context for Third-Party Providers of Pathway Programs
• Institutional Cases
  • DePaul University/EC Higher Ed, 0 years (Kari)
  • American University/Shorelight, 3 years (Senem)
  • George Mason University/INTO University Partnerships, 5 years (Nicole)
• Breakout Discussion Groups
• Group Reports
• Conclusions and Follow Up
Session Purpose and Goals

- Three perspectives at different stages of progression with differing lenses
- Insights and advise for institutions considering pathway programs
- Explore your institution’s opportunities and challenges with respect to pathway programs

Context for Third-Party Providers of Pathway Programs

- Pathway programs are postsecondary programs of study that combine credit-bearing coursework with developmental English as a second language (ESL) coursework to prepare a student who is unable to meet the English proficiency standards for admission (SEVP 2016).
- Currently eight (8) major Third Party companies active in US market (Choudaha, 2017).
- Top three reasons for engaging in partnering:
  - Recruitment access/increase or diversify enrollment
  - Lack of in-house expertise
  - Lack of investment capital/institutional infrastructure
Context for Third-Party Providers of Pathway Programs

Significant expansion of sector participation over the past decade:

| US-based Institutions engaged in Pathway Partnerships with 3rd Party Providers |
|-----------------------------|----------------|
| 2008 | 2016 |
| 2 | 45 |

CONCLUSION: “Successful partnerships will require transparency and inclusive engagement that ultimately support the students and the mission of the institution.” (p. 43).


Case 1: DePaul University

- Founded in 1898
- Largest catholic university in US, 14th largest private university
- 1800 international students, roughly 7%
- Ranked #119, US News & World Report, 2019
- Primary mission is teaching and service
The Pathway Partnership Decision

- Moderate success with USPP program
- New university leadership and direction
- Decision criteria
  - Cultural fit for DePaul
  - Full academic control
  - Stakeholder involvement, particularly our IEP
- Timeframe
  - From RFP to partner selection to final signature = 8 months
  - I-17 approval = about 8 months

DePaul Pathway Structure

- Academics
  - DPU designed, owns, and delivers all curricula
  - Our IEP is a critical component for ESL and Academic courses
  - Graduate Programs in CDM and BUS; UG Programs in all areas
- Staffing
  - Pathway Program Director on-site (EC)
  - DPU Admissions, ISS, Faculty, and other staff as needed
- Governance
  - Weekly meetings with University and EC liaisons
  - Monthly to Quarterly Advisory Committee (3 DPU and 3 partner representatives)
DePaul University and EC Higher Education

• What worked?
  • Open communication, brutal honesty, persistence and occasionally bending on 'non-negotiables'

• What didn’t?
  • I-17 challenges, anticipating staffing changes, coordinating joint marketing and recruitment efforts

• Words of Wisdom
  • Think carefully through every point in your contract
  • Be strategic about university stakeholder buy-in
  • Plan as much as you can in advance of entering the agreement, you can always tweak as things evolve

Case 2: American University

• Founded in 1893, private, Co-ed, liberal arts curriculum
• Around 2,000 international student from over 130 countries
• 8 schools with over 155 degree programs
• #69 best national university (2017 US News & Report)
• Top producer of Fulbright scholars (US News and Report 2013)
• #4 most politically active students (2014 Princeton Review Best Colleges)
Partnership Decision

Timeline and Model

- Contract signed in October 2015
- First undergraduate level soft launch in Fall 2016
- First graduate level in spring 2017
- Evolved from existing AU bridge program on I-17*
- Infrastructure by Shorelight, Academics by AU
Highlights for Consideration

• DHS Permission to issue pathway I-20

• Key players and clarified expectations

• Constraints: time, technology, physical & human resources

• Marketing material & communication management

• The Curriculum, Policies and Protocols

Final Words...
Case 3: George Mason University

- Largest, Public, R1 institution located close to Washington, DC Metro area
- Most diverse college in Virginia
- Founded in 1972
- Three campuses (distributed model) & several sites, including Songdo, Korea
- Enrollments upwards of 36,000
- International enrollment averaging 7%

Timeline & Model

- English Language Institute (ELI) (1982-2014)
  - Intensive English Program
  - Outreach services to the campus community
- Center for International Student Access (2010-2014)
  - ACCESS Program (Undergrad)
  - BRIDGE Program (Grad)
- CISA and ELI actively participate in academic planning for Mason Korea (2012-2013)
- Merger of CISA and English Language Institute (ELI) forming INTO George Mason University Joint Venture (Fall 2014 - Present)

Joint Venture Model

- Shared inputs, risks, rewards
- Faculty are university employees; staff are Joint Venture employees
- Shared decision-making model
- University enrollment goals vs market desires
Engagement with University Stakeholders

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Timeline</th>
<th>Relationship Navigation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Before Transition</td>
<td>• Significant source organizational anxiety and stress</td>
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<td>(Decision-Making)</td>
<td>• University leadership focused on financial solvency needs/mission; IEP faculty</td>
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<td>focused on traditional values of student quality and academic freedom, jobs</td>
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<td>• Destabilization of organizational staffing</td>
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<td>During Transition</td>
<td>• Large scale workgroups over a short period of time to set up and establish</td>
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<td>structural/curricular/admissions changes</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Townhalls with university community to discuss decision and address concerns</td>
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<td>• Tasks of temporary team placed to launch center absorbed by existing employees</td>
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<td>• Hiring of new faculty and staff to add to returning faculty ranks</td>
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<td>• Discontinuities of the university exposed (Winkle, 2011)</td>
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<td>After Transition</td>
<td>• Returning faculty and staff sharing historical information and aiding problem-solving—</td>
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<td>new faculty and staff assimilating old information and new mandates for sense-</td>
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<td>• Institutional leadership transitions offer potential destabilization of forward</td>
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<td>momentum</td>
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<td>• Continuous negotiations and adjustments to respond to market demands for</td>
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Matters for Consideration

**Academic Affairs**
- Decentralized Admissions
- Shared governance over curriculum and admissions
- Academic Integrity
- Stretching FERPA policies
- Speed of changes and assessment results
- Policy development
- International market program interests/desires vs program appetite

**Enrollment management/retention**
- Additional tuition discounting
- Meeting additional needs/expectations of sponsoring agencies
- Development of “custom programs”
- Impact of “success” on Infrastructure (e.g., writing center, loss of IEP as a resource for generalized ESL support)
Advice and Lessons Learned

- Do be open and transparent. Communicate issues that lead to the speed/urgency of the decision.
- Do be willing to take a bit more time to set up the partnership if that means having more buy-in from institutional stakeholders.
- How are faculty who teach English language courses valued and integrated in your institutional structure?
- Do recognize that setting up the partnership is only the beginning and that it requires significant maintenance—plan and identify leadership to oversee this.
- How will the university handle the partner’s inevitable leadership transitions?
- Do ask schools beyond those recommended; “negative” feedback can be helpful to avoid pitfalls.
- Do examine institutional culture around collaboration, working with international students, non-traditional approaches to expedite governance procedures.
- Do start immediately with strategically preparing your faculty/colleges for teaching increased numbers of international students through training and incentivization.

Discussion Questions

- Share your institution’s involvement with third party pathway providers. If you have a pathway partner, what is working well and what is not?
- Which university stakeholders should be involved and at what stages? For example, who should be involved in partner selection, negotiating terms of agreement, determining level of integration/engagement on campus, etc.
- How do you manage misunderstandings between the partner and university stakeholders?
- What strategies have you used to build working relationships between university stakeholders and pathway partners?
- What has been the most helpful advice you have heard today that you can use on your campus?
Bibliography


